

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An improved cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, wherein at least one of the walls has a top edge, the system having a flexible cover material with dimensions approximately the same as the dimensions of the open top and an upwardly facing and a downwardly facing surface, a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of at least one side edge of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material, and a rail capable of being mounted adjacent the edge of the wall and having an outwardly facing portion defining an elongated channel portion, wherein the improvement comprises:

an elongated, substantially rigid second fastening means slideably retained within the channel, the second fastening means having an integrally formed fastening surface positioned to engage the first fastening means, the transverse cross section of the second fastening means being dimensioned to (1) fit within the channel and slideable engagement between the second fastening means and the channel and (2) prevent lateral movement of the second fastening means from the channel;

wherein the second fastening means ~~is prevented from longitudinal escape from the channel.~~ extends along substantially the entire length of the channel and remains slideable along the longitudinal axis of the channel after the first fastening means has engaged the second fastening means, thereby allowing the cover to move relative to the rail.

2. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 1 wherein two of the side walls have top edges and two of the side edges of the cover material have downwardly facing fastening means, and further comprising a second rail, wherein the two rails are capable of being mounted on the two top edges.

3. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 1 wherein the first fastening means and the fastening surface of the second fastening means are selected from the group consisting of loop bearing material and hook bearing material.
4. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 2 wherein the rails are made of materials selected from the group consisting of extruded aluminum and plastic.
5. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 2 wherein the side rails further comprise a mounting flange.
6. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 2 wherein the side rails are secured to the top edges by means selected from the group consisting of bolts, rivets, screws, and C- clamps.
7. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 1 wherein the channel is substantially vertical.
8. (ORIGINAL) The cover system of claim 1 wherein the channel is configured in an inclined orientation.
9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An improved cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, wherein at least one of the walls has a top edge, the system having a flexible cover material with dimensions approximately the same as the dimensions of the open top and an upwardly facing and a downwardly facing surface, a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of at least one

side edge of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material, and a rail capable of being mounted adjacent the edge of the wall and having an outwardly facing portion defining an elongated channel portion, wherein the improvement comprises:

an elongated, substantially rigid second fastening means having an integrally formed fastening surface positioned to engage the first fastening means, the second fastening means being dimensioned to be capable of longitudinal slideable engagement with the channel and also dimensioned to be incapable of lateral movement from the channel, wherein the second fastening means is prevented from longitudinal escape from the channel by a rivet.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of a first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slot mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the elongated slot into a channel formed in the side rail so that the length of the elongated slot extends along the longitudinal axis of the side rail and the elongated slot is slideable along the longitudinal axis of the side rail, ~~the transverse cross section of the elongated slot and the channel being dimensioned so that (1) the transverse cross section of the elongated slot fits within the channel to permit longitudinal slideable engagement between the elongated slot and~~

~~the channel, and (2) the elongated slat is prevented from escaping from the channel in a lateral direction; and~~

second, attaching at least one blocking member to prevent ~~preventing~~ slideable escape of the elongated slat from the side rail[[.]];

wherein the elongated slat is slideable backwards and forwards along the longitudinal axis of the side rail by an amount of play equal to or greater than 3/16 inches and less than or equal to 1 and ½ inches after the first fastening material has engaged the second fastening material.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of a first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slat mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the elongated slat into the side rail so that it extends along the longitudinal axis of the side rail; and

second, preventing slideable escape of the elongated slat from the rail, wherein the slideable escape is blocked by riveting the elongated slat to the side rail.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) In a method of making a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the system comprising a flexible cover having dimensions approximately the same as the open top, the flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface and a downwardly facing surface, the flexible cover material having strips of a first fastening material disposed along at least a portion of two side edges of the downwardly facing surface, the open top container having strips of a second fastening material integrally formed with an elongated slat mounted on a side rail substantially at a top edge of a wall of the container or truck box, the first fastening material and the second fastening material being reversibly engageable with one another to fasten the cover to the open top, the improved method of manufacture comprising:

first, slideably introducing the elongated slat into the side rail so that it extends along the longitudinal axis of the side rail; and

second, preventing slideable escape of the elongated slat from the rail, wherein the slideable escape is prevented by a blocking member attached to the side of the rail, said blocking member projecting into a slot formed in the elongated slat.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated, substantially rigid slat slideably mounted within the channel ~~to allow longitudinal sliding movement between the elongated slat and the channel, the slat and the channel being dimensioned so that the transverse cross-section of the slat fits within the channel;~~

a fastening surface capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means integrated on a surface of the elongated, substantially rigid slat and exposed through the channel, wherein the slat extends along substantially the entire length of the channel and remains slideable along the longitudinal axis of the channel after the first fastening means is attached to the fastening surface thereby allowing the cover to move relative to the rail ~~fastening surface is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means;~~ and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally.

14. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the length of the slat is shorter than the channel and the at least one stop limits the longitudinal movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat do not exit the channel.

15. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail comprises a pair of end caps detachably attached to opposing ends of the side rail.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the slat including an elongated slot formed through said slat;

a fastening surface on a surface of the elongated slat and exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means; and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail is configured to at least partially extend into the slot.

17. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 16, wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail comprises a roll pin removably inserted into a mating hole dimensioned to provide an interference fit to the roll pin and formed in the side rail.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A cover system for an open top container or truck box, the open top container or truck box having a front wall, a rear wall, and two side walls, the system comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of one of the side walls and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a flexible cover material having an upwardly facing surface, a downwardly facing surface, a front edge, a rear edge and two side edges;

a first fastening means disposed along at least a portion of one of the side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material;

an elongated slat mounted within the channel to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the length of the slat being shorter than the channel, and the slat further includes an elongated slot formed through said slat;

a fastening surface on a surface of the elongated slat and exposed through the channel, wherein the fastening surface is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means; and

at least one stop attached to the rail limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally wherein the at least one stop limits the longitudinal movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat do not exit the channel, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the side rail is configured to at least partially extend into the slot.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the first fastening means comprises strip of loop-bearing material permanently affixed to the flexible cover material, and wherein the fastening surface comprises a strip of hook-bearing material permanently affixed to the slat.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the first fastening means comprises a strip of hook-bearing material permanently affixed to the flexible cover material, and wherein the fastening surface comprises a strip of loop bearing material permanently affixed to the slat.
21. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the side rail is extruded aluminum.
22. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 21, wherein the channel defined in the side rails is outwardly facing when the side rail is mounted to the side wall.
23. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 22, wherein the channel is inclined.
24. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the side rail further comprises a mounting flange.
25. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 24, wherein the mounting flange of the side rail is configured to be secured to the side wall by clamps.
26. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one stop is detachable from the rail.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A cover system according to claim 13, wherein the elongated, substantially rigid slat comprises ~~further comprising~~ a plurality of elongated slats mounted within the channel ~~to allow longitudinal sliding movement, and wherein the at least one stop limits the range the slats can slide within the channel.~~

28. (CANCELED)

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A cover system according to claim 13, further comprising:
a second side rail capable of being mounted adjacent the other side wall and defining a longitudinal channel therein;

a second elongated, substantially rigid slat slideably mounted within the channel defined in the second side rail ~~to allow longitudinal sliding movement, the second slat and the channel defined in the second side rail being dimensioned so that the transverse cross-section of the second slat fits within the channel defined in the second side rail;~~

a second fastening surface capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means integrated on a surface of the second elongated, substantially rigid slat and exposed through the channel defined in the second side rail, wherein the second slat extends along substantially the entire length of the channel defined in the second side rail and remains slideable along the longitudinal axis of the channel after the first fastening means is attached to the fastening surface thereby allowing the cover to move relative to the second side rail, ~~fastening surface of the second slat is capable of reversible attachment to the first fastening means and the first fastening means being is disposed along at least a portion of both side edges of the downwardly facing surface of the flexible cover material; and~~

at least one stop attached to the second side rail limiting the range the second slat can slide longitudinally.

30. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 29, wherein the length of the first and second slats are shorter than the channels defined in the first and second side rails, respectively, and wherein the at least one stop attached to the first side rail and the at least one stop attached to the second side rail limits the longitudinal movement of the first and second slats so that the ends of the slats do not exit the channels.

31. (CANCELLED)

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A rail assembly for use in a cover system for an open top container or truck box, the rail assembly comprising:

a side rail capable of being mounted adjacent a top edge of a side wall of the open top container or truck box and having a longitudinal channel defined therein;

an elongated slat slideably contained within the channel, ~~the slat being shorter than the channel, the slat and the channel being dimensioned so that the transverse cross section of the slat fits within the channel;~~

a fastening surface on a surface of the elongated slat and exposed through the channel; and

at least one stop limiting the range the slat can slide longitudinally, wherein the elongated slat is slideable backwards and forwards along the longitudinal axis of the channel by an amount of play equal to or greater than 3/16 inches and less than or equal to 1 and ½ inches.

33. (ORIGINAL) A cover system according to claim 32, wherein the slat is shorter than the channel.
34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A cover system according to claim 32, wherein the slat is shorter than the channel and wherein the at least one stop limits the longitudinal sliding movement of the slat so that the ends of the slat are prevented from exiting the channel.
35. (NEW) The cover system of claim 1 wherein the second fastening means is prevented from longitudinal escape from the channel.
36. (NEW) The cover system of claim 1 further comprising an adjustable tension control assembly fixed in relationship to the rail and in operative relation to a front edge of the flexible cover material.
37. (NEW) The cover system of claim 1 wherein the cover can move relative to the rail after the first fastening means has engaged the second fastening means by an amount greater than or equal to 3/16 inches.
38. (NEW) The cover system of claim 37 wherein the cover can move relative to the rail after the first fastening means has engaged the second fastening means by an amount less than or equal to 1 and 1/2 inches.

39. (NEW) The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of attaching an adjustable tension control assembly fixed in relationship to the side rail and in operative relation to a front edge of the flexible cover material.

40. (NEW) The cover system of claim 13 further comprising an adjustable tension control assembly fixed in relationship to the rail and in operative relation to a front edge of the flexible cover material.